

PARENTS-FLAG EDMONTON

NEWSLETTER

Jan./93

We finished off a successful P-FLAG year with a Christmas party at Dick and Cindy's home on Dec.15 with 16 people in attendance. A big "THANK YOU" to Dick and Cindy for the great hospitality for this event.

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, Jan. 18, 93 7:30 p.m.

For more information phone Lynne at [REDACTED]

1992 IN REVIEW

Edmonton P-FLAG has made many strides forward in the past year. By attending film festivals, the Gay Pride Parade, the AIDS benefit, ect. we have become more visible in the gay community. These efforts have made us more available and accessible to gay people and their families.

1992 saw the election of Edmonton's first openly gay Alderman! Congratulations Michael Phair.

1992 also saw the Catholic Church soften it's stand on homosexuality. It states "most homosexuals do not willingly choose their lifestyles and must be welcomed with respect, compassion, and delicacy." The Catechism calls on homosexuals to practice chastity. The Canadian and U.S. militaries also took steps to stop discrimination against homosexuals in the military.

We also saw the fall of Measure 9 in Oregon, and the acceptance of Article 2 in Colorado. The defeat of Measure 9 showed the people of Oregon that there is support for the rights of lesbians and gays, lets hope they can educate the 43% who voted in favor of Measure 9. The people of Colorado are learning that bigotry is not accepted in any community. Since the passing of Article 2, there has been a widespread call across America to boycott the state and this is directly affecting the economy of Colorado. Hopefully when the Colorado government sits at the end of January they will overturn Article 2 as is expected.

1992 also brought the news that our mentors, David and Frances will be moving permanently to Seattle in the new year. Much as we will miss them in our group, we wish them the best in their future endeavors.

The Human Rights Commission announced that it would bypass the government and begin hearing complaints lodged by homosexuals. Unfortunately a blow was struck against the gay community by the new Klein government with the appointment of Dianne Mirosh as Minister for Community Development. Because of her narrow minded and uneducated mind set she is under the

false impression that homosexuals do have the same rights and more, than heterosexuals have, and consequently she intends to do everything she can to prvrnt the Human Rights Commision from protecting homosexuals. Included in this newsletter is an article from the Edmonton Journal that outlines this in further detail. We must educate this Minister on homosexuality and show her that there is support for what the Human Rights Commision is doing.

Write to:

Dianne Mirosh
room 423
Legislative Building
10731-97 Ave.
T5K 2B6
Edmonton, Alberta

In March Galoc (Gays and Lesbians on Campus) publishes a Gateway newspaper supplement called The Pink Triangle. They would like some articles from P-Flag to publish in the paper. It could be about your child coming out to you, or your coming out to friends and family, your anger, your happiness, anything you want to write about is welcome. If you wish your name can remain anonymous. Don't worry about spelling or sentence structure. Turn in your submissions to Joan before Feb. 16.

The next P-FLAG convention will be held in New Orleans from Sept.3-6 1993. Further information is enclosed.

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Gays favored over others, minister says

She'll review rights commission

TOM ARNOLD
Journal Staff Writer

Edmonton

The provincial human rights commission favors gays and lesbians over other Albertans, says the minister responsible for the commission.

Newly appointed Community Development Minister Dianne Mirosh says she will investigate the commission's procedures with an eye to straightening out her suspicions of favored treatment.

"I don't think there should be a law saying they have rights over and above everybody else," says the former Calgary nurse. "And it looks as though gays and lesbians are having more rights than anybody else. And that's what I want to review."

In a *Journal* interview, Mirosh speculated that heavy lobbying and political pressure exercised by gay and lesbian activists have paid off. Alberta homosexuals have protected rights that no other group or individual has, she says.

"I think everybody should be treated fairly, whether they're gay or lesbian, black or white or whether they're Arabic or Jew."

But, when told that Alberta's Individual's Rights Protection Act already protects people on the basis of both skin color and religion but not sexual orientation, Mirosh was surprised.

"Well then, that is something that I have to review."

Mirosh doesn't have her facts straight, says Dr. Raffath Sayeed, chair of the provincial tribunal.

"Everybody walks around thinking that we're giving lesbians and gay men special treatment. We're not."

"We're talking about fairness — the right to rent an apartment, employment and the right to live like any other Albertan. I don't think that's so special."

Alberta, Newfoundland and the Northwest Territories are the only Canadian provinces without protection for homosexuals.

In a surprise move last month, the seven-member provincial tribunal announced it would begin investigating complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation — even though the government has rejected it as grounds for protection.

Sayeed says that recent court rulings across Canada have established protection for gays and lesbians, suggesting that the Individual's Rights Protection Act implicitly covers sexual orientation.

Although Mirosh supports an end to all forms of discrimination, she says a legislated change to include sexual orientation in the act isn't likely.



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— **Dianne Mirosh**
*Minister for Community
Development*

"A lot of people who are heterosexual feel uncomfortable about this. And I want society, the people that I represent, to feel comfortable about this. We shouldn't overreact to small lobby groups."

Local gay and lesbian activists are furious with Mirosh.

"She's picking on a group of people already among the most vulnerable in society," says city Ald. Michael Phair, also a director of Gay and Lesbian Awareness (GALA).

Says GALA director Liz Massiah: "I don't think she understands that lesbians and gay men are being discriminated against. Her comments are a slap in the face to thousands of people in Alberta and we're not going to stand for it."

"Dianne Mirosh is supposed to be the minister of community development, not community destruction."

The cabinet minister's lack of understanding about the commission's role reflects a narrow but popular attitude in the Tory caucus, says NDP MLA Marie Laing, opposition critic for human rights.

"Many Conservative candidates or members of the legislature do not see the inclusion of sexual orientation as correcting a systemic injustice," she says.